

For Immediate Release

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City of San José Welcomes July 4th with Caution *Residents Urged to Celebrate Safely*

The City of San José welcomes this upcoming July 4th on Saturday by encouraging safe celebrations and reminding residents that all fireworks are illegal in San José. The only **legal** use of fireworks allowed in the City is for a “pyrotechnic display,” operated by a Licensed Pyrotechnician, with a City Permit.

“We’re increasing our outreach to make certain San José residents understand not only that fireworks are illegal but *why* they are illegal,” says Fire Chief, Darryl Von Raesfeld. “This ban was added to the municipal code in the interest of public safety. Fireworks cause hundreds of severe injuries in the United States and ignite thousands of fires in California every year. With our current drought conditions the potential for a major fire incident is incredibly high.”

For many residents fireworks are considered an integral part of July 4th celebrations, along with other traditional community festivities. While fireworks are suitable for large scale events, they must be used under carefully controlled conditions. Groups planning to host a ‘pyrotechnic display’ should contact the Fire Prevention Bureau for permits with the understanding that only fully professional displays under very strict safety regulations will be permitted.

When most residents think of fireworks they think of large bottle rockets, roman candles, and firecrackers. However, the ban includes the popular ‘sparklers,’ usually reserved for younger children.

“Sparklers can reach over 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit,” says San José Fire Marshal & Deputy Fire Chief, David Schoonover. “They account for 50% of fireworks-related injuries to children under age five and 10% of fireworks-related injuries overall.” For residents who’d like to observe the tradition, ‘snappers’ and ‘champagne party poppers’ are *not* considered fireworks and deemed legal for use in San José.

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The penalty for violating the fireworks ban is stiff. Any individual who possesses, stores, sells, or uses **any** materials deemed fireworks, is in violation of the law and subject to arrest. Violation of these laws can result in a fine of up to \$1,000 and possible jail time according to California Fire Code (CFC 7802.3) and the San José Municipal Code (SJMC 17.12.730). For more information on the laws, regulations and rules regarding fireworks in the City of San José call the Fire Prevention Bureau at (408) 535-7750.

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